

# **INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS**

## **United States Department of Agriculture**

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

### **5,000,000 BIG GAME ANIMALS IN THE U. S.**

#### **Biological Survey Reports Results of First Nation-Wide Inventory**

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The first nation-wide attempt to determine the number of big-game animals in the United States showed more than 5 million, reports the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The survey — conducted in 1937 by the Bureau with cooperation from the National Park Service, the Forest Service, State game and conservation commissions and other well-informed agencies and individuals -- covered deer, elk, antelope, buffalo, moose, mountain goat, bighorn sheep, peccary, bears, caribou, and exotic European wild boars. The inventory did not include animals in captivity.

Deer numbered more than 4,500,000. Michigan and Pennsylvania led in white-tailed deer with approximately 800,000 in each State. California had 450,000 mule and black-tailed deer. Elk in the country totalled 165,000; moose, 13,000; antelope, 130,000; bighorn sheep, 17,000; black bear, 81,000; grizzly bear, 1,100; and buffalo, 4,100. There were 43,000 peccaries and 700 European wild boars.

Data for 2 or more years, the Division of Wildlife Research of the Bureau of Biological Survey points out, are required before definite conclusions can be drawn on recent trends in big-game numbers. Accounts of animal numbers published some years ago, however, provide the Division with some basis for comparison.

Antelope, once thought facing extinction, increased about 500 percent from 1924 to 1937. The number of bighorn sheep, on the other hand, dropped from 28 000 (an estimate made by E. T. Seton) to seventeen thousand within 22 years.

Protective measures have helped the deer, elk, antelope, and buffalo, the Bureau declares, but the inventory makes apparent the need for cooperative administrative efforts and vigorous application of sound management plans for preserving other big-game species. The mountain goat, grizzly bear, moose, and caribou, in addition to the bighorn sheep, have apparently declined in numbers during the past twenty years.

State game and conservation commissions and the various Federal and State land-management agencies are contemplating intensive estimates of big-game numbers annually. Such an inventory comprising data carefully and correctly gathered year after year, the Bureau believes, will become increasingly valuable.

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